

# Carousel Task Force Executive Summary

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Of the 3,000 to 4,000 wooden carousels carved in America between 1885 and 1930, fewer than 150 still operate today. Raleigh is fortunate to have two of these operational carousels that were built nearly a century ago.

The carousels are more than just amusements for our children. They also capture the beauty, grace and elegance of an earlier era in our country when people frequented our city parks and their carousels for the pleasures of the visual art, music, joy and sense of community found there.

Raleigh's historic carousels are indeed assets to be proud of and to use as rallying points for public support of our parks. Now is the time to take steps to enhance and preserve these treasures for future generations to visit and enjoy.

## **1.0 Program Statement**

The Carousel Task Force (CTF) agreed on a vision to direct their efforts and a set of guiding principles to convey the overall intent of the recommendations contained herein.

### **1.1 Vision**

The goal of the CTF is to create a thorough and well balanced report to the City of Raleigh which will provide a framework for decisions regarding carousel restoration, maintenance, promotion, fund raising, operational programming, location and potentially new development by the City and its Parks and Recreation Department. The CTF report will support the priorities of Raleigh by serving public needs while preserving the charm, history and entertainment value of Raleigh's prized carousels. Enhanced care and expanded usage of Raleigh's two carousels shall flow from the resulting CTF recommendations which embody the principles listed below in order to ensure that these community treasures provide delight to future generations as well as a source of civic pride for the citizens of our area.

### **1.2 Guiding Principles for the City of Raleigh Carousels**

1. They are valued and should both be designated as historically significant treasures for our city, region and state.
2. They must be regularly and properly operated, maintained and restored.
3. They must be protected from environmental and/or human abuse.
4. They should continue to be operated as amusements rather than to be treated as museum pieces.

5. They must have convenient access and broadly scheduled availability for all citizens and visitors.
6. The carousels are centerpieces for their respective major parks within our city. The plan for their preservation and use must take into account the carousel houses, decoration and furnishing, immediate surroundings including landscaping, and the ancillary amenities which will serve to attract both new and repeat users while ensuring the comfort, enjoyment, sensory experience and safety of visitors and riders.
7. A carousel housing structure which may become no longer needed for that purpose should be considered for future productive and effective reuse that will enhance the overall attractiveness of the park and its carousel.
8. Raleigh's carousels must remain affordable attractions for all citizens. Additional sources of funding for the carousels must be identified to ensure that ride revenues need not be relied upon to cover anything beyond basic carousel operation.
9. Citizens from our area must be kept informed through a wide variety of communication channels and planned promotional programs that they are welcome to visit, appreciate, ride and support Raleigh's carousels.

## ***2.0 Summary Recommendations***

The Dentzel Carousel has been a popular feature in Pullen Park since 1921. The Herschell Carousel in Chavis Park was dedicated when the Park opened in 1937. Funding is proposed in the 2003 Park Bond program for improvements to both the parks and carousels. After much research the CTF feels that substantial changes should be made to both carousel houses to fully protect the carousel rides and offer the best experience to the carousel and park visitor. The following summary is a brief account of the CTF recommendations. Please refer to § 3 Justifications and § 4 Full Recommendations for more detailed discussion and explanation.

The City of Raleigh should:

1. Make available the necessary resources to ensure full restoration and long term preservation of the carousel animals, decorative panels, machinery, and band organs.
2. Provide new structures that house and protect the carousel rides at both parks in keeping with the recommendations of City Council adopted master plans and this report.
3. Assign responsibility for pursuing the listing of the Chavis Park Herschell Carousel as a local Historic Landmark and nomination to the National Register of Historic Places.
4. Assign responsibility to a citizen group to provide recommendations for the most effective reuse of the existing Chavis Park Carousel House once the carousel has been moved to a new structure.
5. Continue the full restoration and repair of the Pullen Park Carousel while investigating and implementing remedies for the degradation of the carousel figures.

6. Provide appropriate spaces for observation, special events and historical and cultural interpretation as part of the Design Program and project plans for construction of new carousel structures. This includes access to restrooms, community gathering space, and opportunities for rentals and retail.
7. Ensure that visual and auditory considerations, as well as site improvements outlined in this report be considered to complete the carousel experience.
8. Utilize appropriate historic styles, materials, and colors in the carousel structures and site improvements.
9. Retain an experienced design firm to perform a Concept and Cost Study for both carousel structures that will provide cost and scheduling estimates, drawings and/or models for the purpose of future fundraising. The Concept and Cost Study is estimated to cost not more than \$20,000 and should be completed prior to the fiscal year 2005-2006 budget process to provide the solid data needed by the city to plan a future fundraising campaign. Private funding of this study may be possible.
10. Initiate a marketing and fundraising campaign without delay upon completion of the Concept and Cost Study. The goal will be to generate public and private funds to augment City resources necessary to complete the building of new carousel houses and provide necessary restoration and preservation of the carousels. A city organization or outside agency with experience in this type of project could be engaged to manage the task.
11. Plan the overall timeframe for the projects so that the support spaces, site improvements and new carousel house at Chavis Park is complete in spring 2007. Planning for the renovation of the Pullen Park Amusement Center and the new carousel house should be completed by that time so that construction can begin in fall 2007. The newly renovated Chavis Park can then serve as an alternative destination while Pullen Park Amusement Center is closed for renovations.